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ABSTRACT

Drawing from the experiences of the remedial/developmental program at Rockland Community College (RCC), this paper suggests a series of strategies for serving the educationally disadvantaged community college student amidst the economic and political pressures of the 1980s. Introductory comments identify the objectives for the development of remedial programs as: (1) to base proposals on the realistic needs of students; (2) to prepare students to meet the competency requirements of mainstream courses or to develop competencies which will be acquired in conjunction with other courses; (3) to maintain low attrition; and (4) to accomplish these goals in a cost-effective manner. Next, the paper explores the services which should be delivered in developmental programs, and the methods of delivery that will be used. Special attention is focused on the need for caution in using new technologies to ensure that they effectively serve the clientele of developmental programs. The next section describes the diversified staffing model used at RCC in the remedial/developmental program, including information on the specific roles and responsibilities of the professional and paraprofessional staff. Examples are provided of traditional instructors moving into developmental instruction. In the next section, changes within the institutional organization and structure are discussed, highlighting the areas of student assessment, counseling, and student support services. Finally, the paper outlines strategies for articulation and effective communication between the remedial/developmental staff and other personnel in the institution. (AYC)

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"Building Adaptable Basic Skills Models: Strategies for Surviving in the 80's"

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Remedial developmental services in post-secondary educational institutions are no longer the exception, but are accepted as the norm in two-year institutions and as a necessity in many four-year institutions. As Roueche and Snow report, "ninety-nine percent of the community colleges and forty percent of the four-year colleges are open admissions."[1] Patricia Cross says further that "The purpose of higher education is not to select those who will be successful but to make successful those who come."[2]

Those institutions which provide effective remedial/developmental services clearly assess the needs of new clientele and develop strategies to meet the needs of the clientele. Enrollment trends in post-secondary educational institutions are already moving in the directions forecast by authorities such as Cross, Roueche, Boylan and Hodgkinson.[3] We are finding that in many of our institutions we are enrolling fewer students who have moved directly from high school to college (ages 18-20) and are admitting a larger proportion of new clientele who are older, who are from minority backgrounds and who are physically handicapped. We know from reviewing placement tests and from assessing the basic skills of these students that many of them are in need of remedial/developmental services in order to succeed in college. We are aware too that many of the students are unsure about their purpose in being in college, they are not certain what to expect from college and they are afraid they will not succeed. They are not clear about their short range and long range vocational goals, they may be unaware of the vocational options which are available to them and they may be unrealistic about the requirements for various occupations.

Although we are aware of the potential impact that decreased federal funding and especially financial aid funding may have on the number of students who enroll in post secondary institutions, we can't ignore the reality that even at prestigious institutions such as Stanford and Berkeley some 90% of the entering freshmen are in need of some type of remedial/developmental instruction.[4] We can assume, therefore,

that only in the most elite institutions will there be no need for remedial/developmental support services.

The proposed decreased federal funding for remediation at the elementary and secondary levels in education also leads us to believe that there is likely to be yet another generation of American high school graduates or drop-outs who will not acquire the basic skills to succeed in post-secondary institutions, and, therefore, the need for remedial/developmental services will continue throughout the 1980's and beyond.

While some institutions will probably attempt to limit access as a way to meet the political and economic pressures of the '80's, others will develop new structures and new partnerships in order to serve a more diverse clientele. As institutional changes are proposed, those of us engaged in remedial/developmental education will need to be flexible, creative and pragmatic. Yet, we must hold firm in those areas where we have evidence from an increasing body of literature and history of experience which indicates that which is effective in dealing with our clientele.

The focus of this presentation is on implementable strategies which will allow an institution to serve educationally disadvantaged students amidst the pressures of the 1980's. When proposing services for our students we will be expected (1) to base our proposals on the realistic needs of the students. We will be expected (2) to prepare the students to meet the competency requirements of mainstream courses or to develop competencies which will be acquired in conjunction with other courses. We will be expected (3) to maintain low attrition. And, finally, we will be expected (4) to accomplish these goals in a cost effective manner.

While these objectives have existed to some extent at least during the 1970's, the pressures upon all of us to meet the objectives will be even greater in the 1980's. A major advantage that we have, however, is that remedial/developmental services in higher education have been conducted in various forms during the past twenty years

and we are in a better position today to determine what methods, techniques and services are effective and which are not. We also know more about our students, how they learn, what special problems they face in gaining an education, etc.

Although many of the examples of the strategies which I'm presenting stem from experiences at Rockland Community College, they are similar to those employed in other institutions throughout the country. I'll also emphasize the need to develop strategies which will accomplish not just one, but all of the objectives. These are: (1) to base proposals on the realistic needs of the students; (2) to prepare students to meet the competency requirements of mainstream courses or to develop competencies which will be acquired in conjunction with other courses; (3) to maintain low attrition; and (4) to accomplish these goals in a cost effective manner.

The model for discussing the strategies is concerned with the following: (1) services which will be offered and methods of delivery, especially those dealing with new technologies; (2) changes in traditional staff roles and retraining; (3) changes in institutional organization and structure; (4) improved communication between the remedial/developmental staff and other areas of the institution. In reviewing these strategies, I'll show not only what has been successful, but I'll point out problems which we've encountered as well.

SERVICES AND METHODS OF DELIVERY - NEW TECHNOLOGIES

When the remedial/developmental program at Rockland Community College was first developed in 1968 the staff recognized the need to design a curriculum to meet cognitive and affective objectives. Although the severity of the basic skills deficiencies of the students in the remedial/developmental program has increased over the years and the types of attitudinal and low self concept problems accompanying these deficiencies have been manifested in various ways, the dual problems have always existed. Therefore, it seemed clear to the staff in 1968 that a unified approach toward dealing with the cognitive and affective was required. This has since been

documented in the literature by Roueche and others as well.[5]

The process which we found useful in establishing the basic curriculum for the program was: (1) to identify in conjunction with the Chairpersons of the English and Mathematics Departments the competencies required for entry into the first level English and Mathematics courses; (2) to identify the skills which students need to acquire in order to achieve the competencies (while we originally went through this process for reading, writing and mathematics, we later followed the procedure for study skills, oral language development, listening and logic and reasoning as well); (3) to assess the types of development in the affective domain that were necessary to change low self concepts and attitudes.

Having identified the areas for remediation and development we then examined the means by which the greatest gain could be acquired at the least cost to the institution. Although we wanted to establish an individualized instructional framework for instruction and we wanted to deal directly with affective development we found that the cost for one-on-one instruction and counseling was prohibitive. We, therefore, examined which of the objectives could be met using delivery systems other than the instructor or counselor. We determined, for example, that hardware and accompanying software did exist for reading and study skills which matched our objectives. We decided to use a traditional classroom with one instructor for 20 students for part of our communication skills instruction and a laboratory conducted by a paraprofessional staff for another portion of the instruction. Mathematics skills instruction was designed for a classroom with one instructor for 20 students. We also designed a series of reinforcement modules to provide additional diagnosis and prescriptive activities to support Communication Skills and Mathematics Skills. We designed a psychology course in which the students could learn how to deal with a college content course and to apply the skills they acquired in Communication Skills and another course which provided an orientation to the college.

Most important, however, we developed a series of seminars to meet affective objectives. These seminars consist of 15 - 20 students and are directed by professional counselors and are assited by paraprofessional counselor-tutors.

Although we've made modifications in the model since we began in 1968, we have maintained the basic structure for Communication Skills consisting of four hours of instruction per week with a Master Instructor in a classroom and four hours per week with a paraprofessional teaching assistant in the laboratory. Diagnosis, prescriptions and evaluation for activities in the classroom and in the laboratory are the responsibility of the Master Instructor. The paraprofessional assistant implements that portion of the prescription which is conducted in the laboratory. A contract is drawn up between the instructor and each student delimiting those objectives which will be met and the way in which mastery will be evaluated. The instructor employs both group instruction and individualized instruction in the classroom while the focus of the instruction in the reading lab is on individualized instruction.

With this model it is necessary for the Master Instructor to understand the different learning styles of the students, to be knowledgeable about individualized instruction and mastery learning, to know what the hardware and software was designed to accomplish and to evaluate the effectiveness of the hardware and software for instructional purposes.

Hunter Boylan indicated at the Learning Skills Specialists' Fall Conference in 1981 that there will be an expanded use of instructional technology throughout this century. He said that, "We'll see a greater use of computer assisted instruction, non computer linked TV systems, instructional calculators, video disks and various interactive systems."[6] As these systems become less expensive and the cost of personnel salaries increase it will be tempting for administrators to try to decrease the number of personnel and to increase the use of technology. While research shows that some students react very positively initially to instructional technology and programmed learning, the research also indicates that without the presence of a person who

expresses concern for the students and who demands accountability the student is likely to drop out, no matter how well designed the system may be.

We recently experienced a situation in which we changed our Mathematics Skills delivery system from that of a Master Instructor in a classroom to a multi-media system in the College Learning Center. The Mathematics Instructor previously had developed a set of objectives for Mathematics Skills, had designed a contract and had utilized a mastery approach with criterion referenced tests which he implemented in a traditional classroom. Instruction within the classroom was individualized and students progressed at their own pace. However, the instructor was in the classroom at all times to provide immediate feedback and support. Our research showed a gain in the number of students completing the course and also showed that students were completing the course more rapidly than in previous semesters. The instructor felt that an additional improvement would be to use a mediated system in the Learning Center for delivery of the instruction. He found a system which was compatable with his curriculum objectives and he proposed that the remedial/developmental students take Mathematics Skills in the Learning Center.

The instructor attempted to follow the basic tenets of mastery learning and to be flexible in dealing with the variable amount of time that students might need to complete the course. Therefore, he diagnosed each student's needs in mathematics skills, placed the student in an appropriate module in the system, and indicated to the student that he/she take as long as necessary to complete the course. If necessary, students were given an incomplete grade at the end of the semester and they could continue their work in the Learning Center at no additional cost for a second or third term. Students were also provided the option of using the system in the Learning Center for 4-6 hours per week at times which they could arrange individually with the Learning Center staff. No specific hours for Mathematics Skills were included in the students' schedules.

While the advantages of having the students use the new system were enormous, the students were generally pleased to be in an environment where students from other areas of the college were engaged in learning activities and the progress was more cost effective, the attrition figures increased. Although the instructor and his assistants were available to provide feedback and support, this was not enough for remedial/developmental students. Many of the students could not handle the lack of structure related to flexible scheduling. Therefore, they didn't attend. Other students initially were very excited about the system. They could see that they were making progress, but at the point at which they began having difficulty with a concept they became discouraged and tended to drop-out. As a result, we're examining more specifically why the students are dropping out and what we might do to provide the type of support necessary for our students. We're considering various interventions such as more specific scheduling, better orientation to the system, alternative group experiences for students who are not progressing and mathematics support groups. In summary, we do not intend to abandon the technology, but instead we see as our challenge the need to use the technology in a manner which will effectively serve our special clientele.

STAFF ROLES AND RETRAINING

As we determine the changing needs of our students and the utilization of new technologies we also see change in the traditional roles of the college staff. The diversified staffing model which we use in the remedial/developmental program at Rockland includes specific roles and responsibilities for the professional and paraprofessional staff.

You'll note that it is different from the traditional organization within a college. The professional Master Instructor is not only in charge of the student's diagnosis, prescription and evaluation, but he/she is also responsible for the supervision of the paraprofessional staff which implement the instruction in the laboratory and in Communication Reinforcement Modules. The major advantage of this

model is that it provides for an increased amount of instruction and support for the students at a cost which is affordable to the institution. Although we would have preferred to hire professional staff for each of our courses and to offer classes with a ratio of 15 students per instructor, this proposal was unrealistic in the 1970's and certainly is unthinkable in the 1980's.

The diversified staffing system has been most successful at Rockland when we have established regular times for joint staff meetings and for meetings between the professional and paraprofessional teams. Students will sometimes try to pit the professional against the paraprofessional and only by having our instructional act together can we provide unified services and also avoid opportunities for destructive behavior by students. The team approach is effective only when there is mutual respect between the professional and the paraprofessional, when there is an opportunity for feedback from the paraprofessional to the professional and when the roles and the reward system are clearly delimited and understood.

The cost for delivery of counseling services has also increased throughout the 1970's and many institutions have cut back considerably in the number of counselors within the institution. The seminars designed to meet affective objectives within our program were originally conducted by members of the Psychology Department staff and later by one or two counselors from the Student Personnel Department. However, as the need increased for additional seminars and for more individual counseling, we again moved to a diversified staffing model. Through funds available from the Special Services Project at Rockland Community College we were able to hire professional counselors who then trained and supervised paraprofessional counselor-tutors to co-lead groups and to provide other support services. Recently we have been able to decrease our staffing costs further by using counseling interns for group and individual counseling. The interns receive supervision and training from the Special Services Project professional counseling staff and they receive the minimum wage for paraprofessional staff. However, most of the persons selected have had some prior

counseling experience and are close to receiving their Master's degree.

While the advantages of diversified staffing are apparent, there are problems associated with the system. A major problem which we have experienced comes at the point in time in which the paraprofessional believes he or she is as experienced and knowledgeable as the professional. We hire persons as paraprofessionals who hold Associate or Bachelor's degrees, usually in an area such as psychology, human services, English or mathematics, and who are often enrolled in additional college courses leading toward a BA or advanced degree. As the paraprofessionals move up the educational ladder and as they have increased experience at Rockland they may tend to feel exploited. They voice complaints ranging from the need for increased salaries to the desire for more direct responsibility for instruction or counseling. Some of the paraprofessionals tend to think that because of their prior experience at the college and their loyalty to the program, they are owed a professional position.

This phenonmenon again requires that we examine carefully the roles and responsibilities of the staff and that we in fact do not exploit those who serve in paraprofessional positions. On the other hand, it requires that we clearly recognize that diversified staffing utilizes persons in different roles with various levels of educational background and experience. When paraprofessionals reach a professional level, they may have no choice but to move up and out of the system and into new roles elsewhere.

We find that some institutions are training persons to enter the field of remedial/developmental education and that given an opportunity to hire new personnel we can recruit people who fulfill the role of remedial/developmental educator so aptly described by Milton (Bunk) Spann.[7] However, as the clientele in colleges change, there will be additional pressure to move traditional senior faculty who were originally employed to teach in traditional departments such as history into areas in the institution where need exists. Certainly this includes remedial/developmental instruction. These persons may have negative feelings about the clientele and probably will experience anxiety about their new role.

I don't contend that every college instructor can be remodeled into an effective remedial/developmental instructor, but I do believe that some persons can be retrained to work with the new clientele and that they can provide additional strengths to the area as well. In retrospect, most of us presently engaged in remedial/developmental education came from traditional academic disciplines and certainly received our graduate education in traditional graduate programs.

Some practical ways in which we can prepare for the eventuality of more of our colleagues joining us in remedial/developmental education include: (1) establishing task forces or other linkages to academic departments; (2) providing opportunities for mainstream faculty to teach remedial/developmental students on an overload basis; (3) encouraging the administration or other pressure groups within the institution to provide opportunities for in-service training; and (4) supporting all efforts to match the reward system within the institution to teaching effectiveness, especially in relation to the new clientele.

One instructor from the English Department who held a Ph.D in Literature recently was faced with the possibility of retrenchment. Although he had not taught in the College Skills Program prior to his retrenchment and he did not have formal training in the teaching of reading, he had served on a task force consisting of members of the English Department and the College Skills Program for the purpose of designing transitional courses in Freshman English. He realized that the new clientele had special needs, but he didn't really know how to deal with the needs. He was given the opportunity to remain at the college if he taught in the College Skills Program. The mandate was clear that he must take additional graduate work in the teaching of reading, but he was provided with a schedule which allowed for some free time for retraining. This instructor was expected to fulfill all of the responsibilities of a Master Instructor in the Program. He was determined to succeed and he utilized all the resources he could from the Program staff. In discussing the experiences of the first semester with the instructor, he said that he had never

engaged in a more difficult teaching experience. However, he found the experience rewarding and he said that he would always look at his teaching differently than he had previously. This particular instructor was moved back into the English Department after one year in the Program. He has now taken a leadership position in the development of courses in the English Department especially designed for new non-traditional clientele. In this case what began as a potentially negative situation was turned into a rewarding experience for the instructor, the remedial/developmental program and for future non-traditional students as well.

Another example of a traditional instructor moving into a leadership position in the development of alternative instructional delivery systems for new non-traditional clientele is a mathematics instructor at Rockland Community College who most recently organized the Media Learning Center in the College Learning Center. This instructor is a respected full professor in the Mathematics Department and is the author of six textbooks in mathematics. However, during the past twelve years he taught Mathematics Skills in the College Skills Program as an overload. He recognized that the needs of the remedial/developmental students were different from those of other students and instead of taking a defeatist attitude and failing those students who couldn't learn by traditional lecture methods, he began experimenting with alternative methods. Monies were provided through the Special Services Project for him to design a mathematics skills curriculum based on mastery learning. At first he was not convinced that mastery learning would work. However, he agreed to try mastery learning and with the assistance of a consultant he designed the course. When his students made more progress more rapidly than ever before he was convinced that the system had merit. He became so enthusiastic about mastery learning that he asked the college administration to allow him to design a mathematics laboratory using mastery learning in the College Learning Center. While the laboratory was originally designed to deal with Mathematics Skills it has now been broadened to serve students in four other content areas as well.

Another resource for staffing which has been utilized for remedial/developmental students in particular and which will be expanded in the future is adjunct staffing. While the adjunct often can provide expertise in areas such as reading instruction which the college staff may not have, these persons face special problems related primarily to job insecurity. Like the paraprofessionals they may tend to feel exploited and they may expect (usually unrealistically) that their part-time position will lead to a full-time position. They may want to be involved in the totality of the department, but they can't as they don't have the responsibility for curriculum development and policy. The department administrator who hires the adjunct faces a dilemma - he/she wants the person to becom ego involved to some extent at least. Yet the person must be helped to realize that the position is temporary.

In an organizational structure such as the program structure we have at Rockland we find it imperative that our adjunct staff attend staff meetings and preservice workshops. This is a condition of employment and in some cases we pay persons additional money for these sessions. We've also found that it is possible to utilize the special expertize of some of our adjunct staff in curriculum development. This tends to improve morale and involvement. However, these projects have been time limited and were designed for very specific purposes.

Another source of support for nontraditional clientele can come from peer tutors. The special role of the tutor provides a bridge between the professional instructor or paraprofessional and the student. Given adequate training and supervision peer tutors can be effective and can serve as good role models. Tutors who are graduates of the remedial/developmental program or courses give students a realistic impression that success is possible.

Although there are various types of models for peer tutoring which can be utilized, I'll focus here on the model used at Rockland Community College. The model was originally designed for use in the remedial/developmental program and has now

been expanded for use within the entire college. It operates out of the College Learning Center. Essentially, tutors are recommended by members of the academic department based on competency in a content area. Tutors must then enroll in a one hour course in Tutoring Seminar or Practicum or in a three hour course entitled Psychological Approaches to Learning. As part of the course requirement students must participate in a five hour practicum where they tutor under the supervision of the coordinator of the Peer Tutoring Program and the instructor of the course. The course itself consists of five or six seminar sessions based on topics such as, "ingredients of successful tutoring," the "nature of the community college and its clientele," "basics of educational theory," and "strategies for dealing with special students."

INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

As we move into the 1980's we'll see changes within our institutions and our survival and our ability to provide quality services to our students will depend on our involvement in and influence on these changes. Three areas which probably will undergo the most change include assessment, counseling and student support services.

With a greater diversity of students and fewer financial resources we'll need to more precisely match student needs to instructional and other services. This will require a system of assessment and placement which is fair and which can be defended in an age of emphasis on consumer rights. While some institutions have relied on high school records and rather subjective measures for college admission and placement, we're finding that these records and procedures are no longer reliable. For our increasing number of reentry students and part-time students, high school records may not even be available. Assessment is vital if we are to match learning styles to various instructional delivery systems and thus reduce costly attrition. Assessment data also provides the institution with information about the students which can be used in future development. One key to cost effectiveness is knowing who your clientele are, eliminating outmoded courses and programs and getting a head

start on designing systems to meet the needs.

An example of the effect of an institutional structural change on the remedial/developmental area is the move at Rockland toward a comprehensive college competency assessment center. The process involves not only an examination of our current placement procedures, but a possible recommendation that all students attain competency in reading, writing and mathematics as a condition of graduation. Tied into this mandate would be the requirement that students would be placed in various course sequences and programs based on assessment test scores. Obviously this also would mean a review of the competencies required in the College Skills Program and the relationship of our curriculum to various freshmen level course options. This new procedure would also impact on the current needs assessment process we have in the College Skills Program.

Instead of trying to avoid this institutional development, we've chosen to take a leadership role in its design and to be especially cognizant of the special needs of our clientele in the system design. We've been very concerned that the new system focus on matching student needs and services, not on eliminating students who score low on placement instruments, for example.

Many institutions are seriously cutting back on counseling services or are developing different systems for delivery of counseling services. Personal counseling is a luxury many institutions feel they cannot provide and, therefore, refer students to social service agencies for counseling instead. Academic advisement is still considered an important function within post-secondary institutions, but the responsibility for advisement is increasingly the function of academic departments. Vocational assessment is replacing vocational counseling in some institutions. The change in title not only implies that the function might be performed by someone other than a counselor, but it also suggests that the place for the function could be outside of a traditional counseling center. In reviewing the chain of events at Rockland we have seen a move to involve both faculty and counselors in vocational

assessment. The function takes place in the newly designed Life Skills Center. Seminars ranging from "Self Awareness/Occupational Choice" to "Alcohol and Drug Use and Abuse" are provided for credit. The director of the center offers leadership training sessions for faculty and counselors who upon completion of the training are certified to be group leaders.

This development poses special problems for those of us involved with the remedial/developmental program. We now must review our seminar offerings in relation to those provided through the Life Skills Center. We need to consider the implications of this development on the future of our unified comprehensive skills program. We're asking questions such as: "What will be the future role of counselors in our program? What type of training will be required? Will our instructional staff eventually be required to handle academic advisement and deal with students' complex personal problems? Is it realistic to add these responsibilities to an already over extended staff?

We don't have the answers to all of these questions, but in this area too we will carefully examine options and perhaps redefine staff roles and responsibilities, provide additional in-service training for our staff and keep the college administration aware of the needs of our clientele.

Many institutions have recognized the need for on-going instructional support services for students. Although these services may exist in a coordinated learning center like that developed by Frank Christ in California, many of our institutions have various types of non-coordinated services or less comprehensive peer tutoring programs, mediated services etc., which may happen to be located in one place. The Learning Center at Rockland is located in the Library-Media Center. Included in the Center is the headquarters for the Media Services Department, the comprehensive tutorial center (which finally became coordinated, but which had consisted of at least five separate departmental tutoring operations), the Media Learning Center with mediated Mastery Instruction in Accounting, Business and Medical Terminology as well as Mathematics Skills, a former CETA sponsored project in the development

of typing skills, two classrooms, a testing room, several dry carrels which students sometimes use for study purposes, offices for the College Skills Program Laboratory Coordinator and Special Service Master Counselor and more recently the Life Skills Center.

Although the college had envisioned that the Learning Center would be coordinated and a director would be hired, this became financially prohibitive. Instead, the college administration allowed those programs to function which were cost effective and which had faculty and student support and involvement. The peer tutoring program functioned because of the support of a few faculty members and the increasing use by students, as well as the development of a way to make it self supportive. The Media Learning Center functioned because of the support of a key faculty member and the Dean of Instruction and the availability of grant money to purchase the hardware and software. The CETA project functioned because the college received a grant to establish the program.

I don't think the pattern of development of the Learning Center at Rockland is particularly unique. Probably each of us can cite examples from our institutions where a change was unplanned and uncoordinated. Although the major developments in the Learning Center at Rockland occurred last year, the impact of this changed structure has already been felt by the remedial/developmental program. I previously mentioned the example of our moving Mathematics Skills to the Learning Center and the advantages and disadvantages associated with that shift. On the other hand, the development of the Learning Center has provided us with further opportunities to utilize our staff in serving additional students. Our exposure in the Learning Center through Mathematics Skills and peer tutoring and the recognition by many of the department chairpersons of the need for additional reinforcement in communications skills and mathematics skills has provided us with the opportunity to offer Reinforcement Modules for students outside of the College Skills Program. We follow our basic model of diagnosis, prescription and evaluation in designing individualized programs

for students. Sometimes we design modules for specific groups of students such as the nurses and utilize content from the disciplines as well. In summary, we consciously became involved with the new structure because we saw that our students could be served there effectively and we saw that we could extend our influence through the new structure as well.

COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS

Paramount to all of the strategies that I've described is the need for articulation and effective communication between the remedial/developmental staff and other personnel in the institution. Some of our programs and services have existed because we quietly met the needs of the students who were sent to us and we didn't "get in the way" of the college mainstream. Others of us who received more exposure and administrative and faculty support initially were then expected to achieve "miracles" with our students. Each year this became more difficult because the entry skill levels decreased and the attitudinal and self concept problems increased. In many ways we represented a threat to our colleagues. Our support of non-traditional clientele and egalitarian post secondary education made us appear a bit odd, naive, unrealistic, and most important, unwilling to uphold the standards of the institution.

However, I contend that because we have been in a position where we have had to defend our very existence, we have had to be more realistic, creative and innovative than have most other departments in the institution. We have had to uphold competency standards. Our effectiveness has been evaluated constantly because the products of our endeavors - our students - have been required to achieve competencies and to succeed in mainstream courses. If their achievement and staying power was generally good, we were considered successful. If the results were negative, we were accused of not being successful. We have had to assess the needs of changing clientele and to develop techniques and curriculum that worked. Not only have we had to do this once, but we've had to do it constantly.

The necessity to understand the needs of nontraditional clientele and to develop

techniques and curriculum that are successful are special skills that will be increasingly required in the 1980's. Our survival will depend on our ability to continue to do well that which we know how to do and to communicate that effectiveness to our colleagues within the institution. We will need to take a leadership role in retraining of college personnel and in the development of transitional courses and other effective instructional programs for our students. This can come from informal communication through task forces and committee functions or more formal organized communication through workshops and presentations.

We must be empathic and understanding of the financial and political pressures faced by our administrators and work cooperatively with them in the design of new structures. This communication can also take the form of informal discussion or more formal reports and proposals. We may need to expand our communication network and organize new patterns for coordinated services between our programs and services and other federal and private funded projects such as TRIO and the newly created Private Industrial Councils. Our skills and expertise may very well be utilized in programs offered off campus in business and industrial settings. In fact, as financial aid budgets are decreased, the private sector may very well become a major source of support for post secondary education and job retraining.

Finally, we need to provide opportunities for our students to communicate within the institution. Each year at Rockland we hold a Spring Festival in which the College Skills Program students demonstrate their special talents to other students, faculty and staff. Events include musical and dramatic presentations, art and photographic exhibits and the preparation of and sharing of various ethnic foods. Through this activity the remedial/developmental students communicate to others in the institution that they do have worth and can make contributions to the institution.

The 1980's will provide us with many challenges. But, I believe that we can meet these challenges and that we can emerge stronger than ever before.

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